

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

### Personnel and Staffing

Maintaining a roster of personnel adequately trained and available to respond to calls remained the number one challenge for the department over the past year. Our current roster is now at 28. Christopher Sullivan resigned in March to take a job out of the country. Peter Nash returned from his leave of absence in August and sadly Jeff Kiel resigned in December to commit his time to another endeavor out of town. We will surely miss Jeff as his contributions to the department were many. It will be difficult to replace his talent and skills. Lloyd Burke was promoted to regular firefighter in July and we also welcomed John D'Auria to the ranks of emergency medical technician (EMT) after receiving his state certification in April. Congratulations are in order for both Lloyd and John.

Once again we have placed ads in the Carlisle Mosquito for anyone who may have the qualifications and interest to become a member of the department. We have reached a point where we really need new members in order to maintain our service to the town. Please contact my office if you are interested in becoming an EMT with the department.

The department continues to take advantage of the senior tax worker program to support the administrative tasks in the chief's office. Under this program the department receives a total of 70 hours in support of clerical and administrative tasks. I am very grateful for this help, although it is limited. The department has requested administrative support via the budget process without success. Due to State and Federal requirements the number of hours necessary to process paperwork for departmental operations continues to increase each year.

### Training

Auxiliary firefighters Burke, Ho, Sullivan and Martin graduated from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Firefighter I/II training class in March. Lloyd Burke was presented with the Martin H. McNamara Award given to the most outstanding student of the class, nominated by the course instructors. This is a very distinct honor and Firefighter Burke is to be commended for his hard work. We are very proud of his achievements. This essential training is very important in rounding out a firefighter's knowledge and skill base. Sixty percent of the department has now received training at the Firefighter I/II level.

In addition to our monthly continuing EMT education the department conducted a 30 hour EMT refresher course at our fire station this fall for all EMT's. Hiring a qualified instructor to come to our station and provide this refresher training allows us to maintain staffing in town while our EMT's learn and train together as a group. This arrangement also makes it much more convenient for our EMT's.

## Calls and Statistics

Department activity was up mostly due to the Nor'easter rain storm and flooding in March. There was an emergency declaration by the State and the department responded to 65 calls for assistance from residents over a three day period. Several areas, including some roadways were damaged and dozens of residents reported water damage to their homes. Middlesex County was declared a disaster area which opened the channels for federal assistance for the town and residents. The fire department expended over \$11,000 during this period responding to calls. We filed the necessary paperwork requesting reimbursement from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for these costs.

In April a home heating oil leak was reported at South Street and Fifty Acre Way. The department responded, investigated, stopped the leaking and mitigated the environmental damage. Both local and state regulatory agencies were contacted and responded to the scene to begin the process of mitigation, assessment and recovery. As of this writing the monitoring of the recovery at the scene continues.

## Projects

The fire station cistern project was bid in July and the contract was awarded in August to the C. Naughton Corp. of Weymouth, Massachusetts. Work began immediately, however there with a few difficulties with the tank installation due to a heavy rain storm. The cistern was reinstalled in the ground 90 percent complete in December after passing the leak test. This 40,000 gallon cistern will provide water for fire protection in the center district, including portions of Bedford, Westford, Concord, School, Church and Rockland Roads.

Deputy Chief White continued to work with architects and engineers on the school project which included reviewing the fire lanes, cistern details, fire sprinkler system and fire alarm system for the new building project scheduled to start in the spring of 2011.

The municipal fiber cable project is still in the planning and design stages as the work now takes into consideration the needs of other departments and facilities of the town. While the primary purpose of the fiber cable installation between the school and the communications center is public safety, it is now planned to include linking the other municipal buildings.

The department reviewed plans and commented on two developments: Chestnut Estates on Rutland Street and Elliot Farms on River Road.

### Emergency Medical Services

During the year EMT's continued to receive training on changes to the statewide pre-hospital treatment protocols.

The Emerson Hospital advanced life support service (ALS) changed on February 14, 2010. This change ended 28 years of paramedic service provided exclusively by Emerson Hospital. Professional Ambulance from Cambridge Mass became the contracted provider for ALS services in the Emerson area. Our EMT's received ALS/BLS interface training which included assisting with 12 lead EKG's, use of the Lukas CPR device, orientation on intercostal IV's and COPD patient treatment. The two main advantages of the new service provided by Professional are that there are now two paramedic units for the Emerson area and the quality of the care in the field for our patients has increased. As part of the change to make this new system viable ambulance fees were increased significantly. In addition, as part of the agreement, Professional Ambulance will keep all of the revenue from private insured ALS patients they treat. All ambulance billing is now handled by Professional Ambulance for the Town and they receive 4% of the fee collected for billing and administrative costs. Carlisle receives all receipts from ALS Medicare and private insured basic life support (BLS) patients. While we are nearing our first year of this new arrangement it appears that this change will be revenue neutral from the previous year under the old system.

### Apparatus, Vehicles & Equipment

The annual town meeting in May approved funds for the replacement of Engine 6. Specifications were developed and bids opened in November. The contract was awarded to Greenwood Fire Apparatus of Attleboro, Massachusetts. Delivery of the new engine is expected in early summer of 2011. Capital funds were also approved for a fiber communications cable project which will link the school site, police station, communications center, Town Hall and fire station. Lastly, funds were appropriated for the replacement of 15 year old self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) air tanks. An application was filed with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for the replacement of 22 of our 24 SCBA units.

In April the town received a homeland security equipment distribution from the Northeast Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council. Items the town received included sump pumps, sand bags, traffic barriers, a portable generator, and an equipment trailer. The value of these items represented \$ 17,000.

I continued to work with the finance committee to inform them of the difficulty of running the department with budgets that are basically flat for several years. We are working together to increase the budget lines in the areas of building, vehicle, cistern and equipment maintenance for FY 2012.

Late this fall I presented information to the selectmen regarding the current condition of 21 cisterns the department is responsible for. There are now a total of 35 cistern installations in Carlisle. The challenge has been trying to maintain them within the fire department budget. The estimated costs necessary for the current repairs of four cisterns totals several thousand dollars. The selectmen are in support of making the necessary repairs in FY 2011 by utilizing the reserve fund. More of an issue however, is the long term need to adequately maintain these facilities. As we move forward, discussions are underway with the finance committee and LTRC committee regarding solutions. One suggestion I have made is to establish a cistern maintenance fund where developers contribute monies for future maintenance needs.

We were once again the recipient of a generous grant from the Nichols Foundation. These funds will be used to enhance our audio visual equipment in support of the training program. In addition some new software is being considered.

### Fire Station Facilities

Space at the fire station gets tighter each year with the addition of new equipment and the replacement of apparatus with larger vehicles. The new ambulance is longer and it does not fit in the bay designed for EMS operations. This is a problem that creates additional challenges for our EMT's. The need for additional office work space and record storage has become very real. At some point in the near future the space problem will need to be addressed.

### Open Burning

Open burning season runs from January 15<sup>th</sup> until 4:00 PM on May 1<sup>st</sup>. As a reminder, residents must register with the fire department in order to be issued a burning permit during this period. Residents only need to register once however, once registered residents must still call each day they wish to burn. Many thanks to the residents that maintained safety during the 2010 burning season. There were 822 residents registered with 916 burning permits issued for the season.

Please be aware that state regulations require that all fires be extinguished by 4:00 PM and there can be no smoke or hot coals. We receive many complaints regarding this each year. You may lose your burning permit for the season if this rule is not observed.

Additional rules include:

- A responsible adult must be in attendance during open burning at all times.
- Fires may not be left unattended. Keep children away from the fire.
- A callback telephone number is required when issuing the permit and a telephone must be nearby in case of emergency.
- The fire department reserves the right to suspend the issuance of open burning permits at anytime it deems necessary in the interest of public safety.

### New Regulations

In April a new regulation regarding smoke detector upgrades upon sale or transfer of homes constructed prior to January 1, 1975 took effect. Upon the sale or transfer of a home constructed prior to January 1, 1975 a photoelectric smoke detector is required within 20 feet of a kitchen or bath with a shower; in other areas a dual technology detector is required (ionization and photoelectric). Contact the fire prevention office for more information.

On July 1<sup>st</sup> another new regulation regarding oil lines and oil safety valves took effect. Homeowners without a protected oil line or an oil safety valve need to upgrade by installing either of these in order to be in compliance. For additional information contact the fire prevention office at 978-287-0072.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the department, especially the officers for their continued hard work and dedication. In addition, the department has been very fortunate to receive the unwavering support of the residents. Finally, as chief I am especially appreciative of the support from the Board of Selectmen.